

**From:** Randy Hill  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
**Date:** 1/15/02 12:03pm  
**Subject:** RE MS Settlement

As a long time software developer (who has never worked for Microsoft or owned their stock), I urge you to strike a blow for consumers, and drop your suit. MS has served as a strong competitor against potential monopolists such as Digital Research, IBM, Novell, Sun, Oracle, & Netscape, which is why current and former executives of those companies continue to lobby you against Microsoft. Instead you should stand fast for Microsoft's right to compete and for consumers rights to benefit from that competition.

Digital Research sold CP/M and derivatives for \$200 and up to consumers when IBM PC was released, it was MS's release of MS/DOS that made the PC affordable and usable. Adjusted for inflation, the price of Microsoft's operating system has barely increased (from \$40 - \$100 over 20 years), yet instead of a cryptic command line interface with minimal utilities written by less than a dozen engineers, consumers now get the fruits of thousands of engineers efforts containing built in pc & printer networking, graphical user interfaces, high speed file systems, word processor (wordpad), internet browser, calculator, e-mail, paint program, terminal program, games, etc.

If you force Microsoft to unbundle any of these products, you will cost consumers millions of dollars by forcing them to pay separately for each of the products they need. No software company has the right to compete by forcing consumers to pay for what another company is willing to provide as part of a bundle. As a software developer I know that "middleware" is a dangerous place to compete since it's likely to be incorporated into a future OS release, but I also know that I benefit when MS bundling continously makes their OS more feature rich and accessible, as an internet developer I know our market would have been retarded had not Microsoft made internet access simple, easy and free by bundling explorer.

I also know that Netscape had dozens of competitors, which they brutally destroyed by giving away their browser (they of course say they only gave away a "beta" but I was there, the beta was a very solid application that made it unnecessary to buy a browser from anyone else). Unlike Microsoft, they didn't plan to keep their browser free, just until they made it the dominant middleware for accessing the internet, then like a good monopolist they planned to stick to the consumer. Now the DOJ wants to stick to us and force everyone to pay \$49 for a "browser tax"?

Look through history. Lotus dominated the spreadsheet market, forcing everyone to pay \$500 for the "standard", a standard so entrenched that no company could compete successfully against them. Microsoft and others created better spreadsheets, but to no avail. It wasn't until Microsoft was smart enough to create Office, giving corporations much more value (word-processing and other products) for the same \$500, that the monopoly

was broken. Consumers saved hundreds of millions of dollars due to Microsoft's efforts.

It's the same in networking, where Novell built a standard around their decrepit Netware Server operating systems. It wasn't until Microsoft created Windows NT, and built a cheaper, better network operating system that consumers and corporations had a choice. It's the same in databases, where MS keeps Oracle honest, and in workstations & servers, where MS keeps Sun honest. Please strike a blow for competition and drop your suit, please don't force me and other consumers to pay more for our software.

thanks,  
Clarke Hill